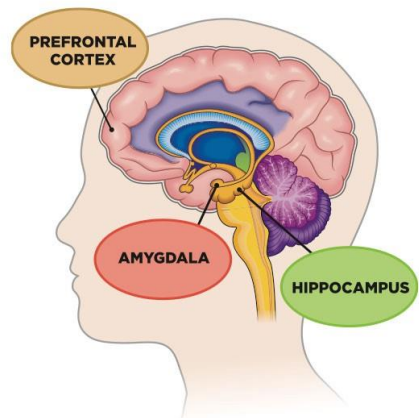


Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social emotional learning (SEL) has been occupying a central role in education curricula for a while. Its main components, i.e. self-awareness, self-management, interpersonal skills, responsible decision making, are all behavioural changes that take place in a person. Therefore learning SEL, is all about practices that need to be cultivated. When understanding this deeper, we would realise that these changes in behaviour or personality, are largely determined by the core practice of mindfulness, which evolves in depth when practiced consistently. Hence, mindfulness is the core or the pivot on which all SEL components are built.

Understanding mindfulness and its impact on the brain helps us to understand these behaviours rationally. The three main areas of the brain on which mindfulness has an impact are

- the prefrontal cortex
- the amygdala
- the hippocampus



Source: <https://medium.com/@rohanpoosala/build-that-prefrontal-lobe-up-c72434186dfd>



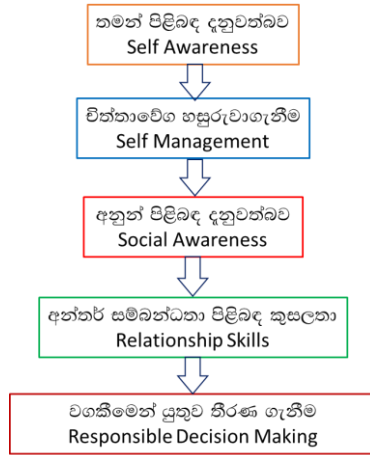
The amygdala is the brain's radar for threat. When it receives input from our senses it immediately scans for danger. The amygdala circuitry triggers a fight-flight-freeze response via stress-hormones like adrenaline & cortisone. The reaction of the individual becomes instantaneous, very emotional and may sometimes be inappropriate or even dangerous. Typically known as knee-jerk

reactions. Mindfulness practice slows this pace, calms the amygdala and settles the 'reactivity mode'.

The prefrontal cortex (PFC) is the most privileged part of our brain, occupying a significant physical space in our forehead. It is referred to as the executive centre of the brain, capable of complicated cognitive function like rational thinking, sensible decision-making and responsible behaviour. Mindfulness increases the activity & function of the PFC and allows the PFC to modulate the behaviour of the amygdala.

The hippocampus is responsible for memory, and the ability to store and retrieve information. It also regulates emotions. And the hippocampus increases in activity & becomes more functional with mindfulness practice.

Understanding SEL through practicing mindfulness will help teachers and students to fulfil their academic responsibilities competently. They will eventually become responsible individuals capable of taking decisions with maturity, and not be hasty in making judgements. Their ability to face challenges in and out of the classroom will be enhanced. Moreover they will become empathetic and considerate, and will be able to develop values that help in being useful citizens.



Source: <https://www.clarksonchs.wa.edu.au/index.php/main-mnu/special-programs/social-emotional-learning-sel>

